

Home of Valentine Museum Built One Hundred Years Ago

THIS board of trustees of the Valentine Museum has issued invitations for a series of receptions to be given during this week, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the erection of the building in which the priceless collections of books, engravings, paintings, casts and archaeological specimens constituting the museum are housed.

Mordred, in his interesting book "Richmond in Bygone Days," now long since out of print, says that towards the close of the eighteenth century, the city's legal fraternity "possessed a greater number of members of distinguished talent than almost any other in the Union, and many of them resided on Shockoe Hill." John Marshall, Edward Livingston, Philip Norborne Nicholas, Edmund Randolph, Daniel Call, James A. Alexander, Batts, William Wirt, Alexander Meade and John Wickham were among the most distinguished of the elite.

From the Capitol Square northward there ran several numbered streets, along which and the surrounding lettered avenues stood charming homes of many of the most prominent professional men of Richmond, surrounded by capacious gardens shaded by stately trees. This part of the city—Shockoe Hill—had been recently been transformed from field and forest.

Erected in 1812, Colonel John Harvie, the Register of the Land Office, had his residence where the Women's College now stands. This he sold to John Wickham, "the eloquent, the witty, the graceful," as Mordred describes him, who is well known in history as Arthur Rippon's counsel. Mr. Wickham continued to reside here until 1812, when he erected the beautiful house which is still standing at the corner of Clay and Eleventh Streets.

In those days Benjamin Mills, an architect of rare merit, constructed many houses in Richmond. Monumental Church, the Brockton-borough residence (now the Confederate Museum) and the Archer house at the corner of Franklin and Sixth Streets are pieces of Mr. Mills' work. Fortunately for succeeding generations the date of construction of the Wickham house is cut in the rear exterior stuccoed wall. With only a comparatively small entrance porch, the Wickham house stands, stately and unassuming, on the corner of the Clay street pavement. The walls, which are very thick, are of brick, and stuccoed. The doors are of solid mahogany, with silver-plated hinges and knobs, and the floors are of heart pine.

As one enters the house, he passes from the vestibule beneath a grand arch to the circular hallway. From this hallway ascends a winding stair which terminates on a gallery in the shape of a palette. The banisters of the stairway and the gallery are of mahogany, while on the baseboard is carved a chain of magnolia buds and blossoms. One rarely sees such wonderfully delicate hand-carving as is used in the decoration of the woodwork in the rooms of this old mansion. The doorways are carved in chain design, while in the drawing room and parlors are carved in chain design bunches of dahlias with their leaves adorn each door-post. On the west side of the house is the old dining room, large and splendidly proportioned, and here over each doorway the hand of a master wrought delicate designs in garlands of grapes and sheaves of wheat. The chambers in the upper story of the house are refreshingly large, and here, too, one finds the daintiest heading on base-board, hand of a master wrought delicate designs in garlands of grapes and sheaves of wheat. The chambers in the upper story of the house are refreshingly large, and here, too, one finds the daintiest heading on base-board, hand of a master wrought delicate designs in garlands of grapes and sheaves of wheat.

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A feeling of satisfaction, of restfulness, of peace, takes possession of one who but casually glances at these rare and beautiful objects. One who lives among them can but feel this magic of creation—a refuge from all that is startling and glaring and revolting in modern architecture. He who built this old house certainly loved God's sunlight and fresh air—windows, windows everywhere. From sunrise to sunset there are golden pathways through this house.

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Hall, Showing Circular Stairway.

brick walls, and many goodly fruit trees and grape vines on trellises and latticed arbors vie with the flowers in making the garden a place of delight. In one corner a century-old magnolia tree (it was planted in 1597) makes June fragrant.

While today this ancient mansion is a house where are gathered objects for the spreading of knowledge and many specimens for the scientific study of the physical and industrial development of man, and of his pastimes, of his art and his literature, still it is a house of memories of even the more precious things of man in his individual and family life. Here the many children of John Wickham grew to manhood and womanhood; here they trod as babes and played as older children; here the daughters of the house were wooed and won and pledged their troths. The sounds of their voices are still echoed by these old walls. The dear dead have dreamed within these walls. In more recent years a well remembered and highly esteemed citizen of Richmond gathered his cultured family and friends about him here, and another family of children knew it as their home. In the quiet of the night often hears the ring of long gone laughter over the result of some boyish prank.

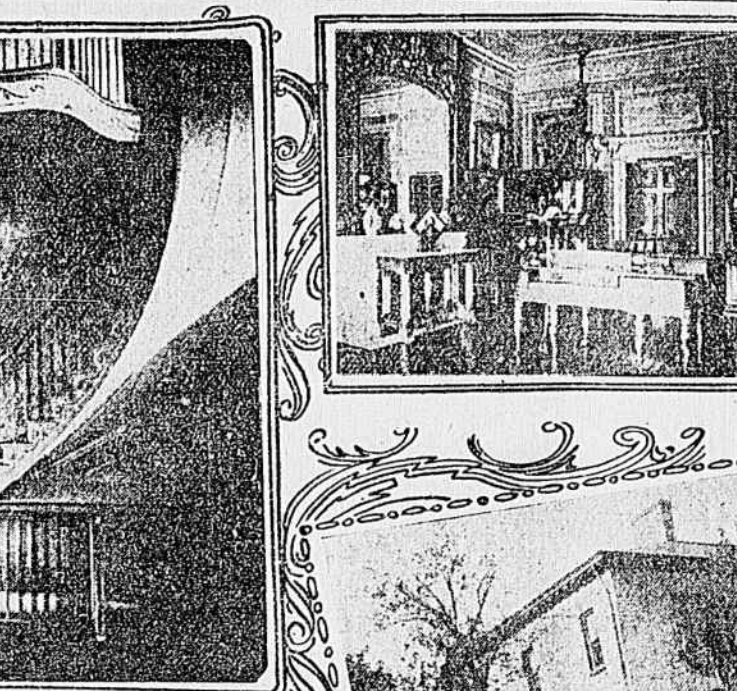
The cries of heartbroken babes, the sobs of heartbroken men and women; the sobs of silver-haired boy and maid; the quiet measured tones of men discussing politics, art, science, letters—all are of the substance of this old house.

Once, not so very long ago, a rare poet, one who has come to know the dream-world of this old house, one who understands the things of the spirit, requested of his friend, the curator, that he be allowed to plant a bunch of forget-me-nots in the garden. Upon the sign and symbol of his love will bloom.

Many Changes Made. About 1839 or 1840 the house, with its garden and outbuildings, passed, by sale, from the Wickhams to John P. Ballard. Mr. Ballard in turn sold the house to James D. Brooks, from whom Mann S. Valentine, the second proprietor, purchased it in 1872. Many changes have been made from time to time in the decorations in the house, however, before the time of its purchase by Mr. Valentine. The old high mantels have given place to beautiful Spanish-American marble; chandeliers, in many designs, swing from the ceilings of the rooms; the many light windows are replaced by single paneled sashes, and the walls of drawing-room and dining-room are of the work of a later period.

It will be of interest to many persons to know that during the War between the States this house was the residence of the Honorable C. G. Meminger, Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederate States.

During the early part of the nineteenth century we find the first Mann S. Valentine, a man of great ability, a resident of Richmond. He was a substantial merchant, and a man greatly interested in the progress of the capital of his native State. Mr. Valentine was a man who possessed a discriminating artistic sense, and collected many interesting and notable paintings. He was possessed of a fine library, and was widely read in all matters pertaining to science and art. It is not surprising that he gave to the Valentine Museum, the second of Mann S. Valentine, the second owner of the Valentine Museum, Edward W. Valentine, the sculptor, and William Winston Valentine, the artist and philosopher. Born into an atmosphere of scholarship, meeting on every hand an appreciation of the very best in science and art and letters, these men were greatly encouraged in undertaking the collection of rare archaeological, historical and artistic objects. Years of student days spent by them on the Continent were productive of much interesting material for their family museum. After a distinguished career as a writer and traveler, William Winston Valentine died unmarried. Edward W. Valentine, the sculptor, has no children. To Mann S. Valentine, the second owner, and his wife, Ann Maria Gray, were born nine children, seven of whom were sons. Among these children the varied gifts of the father were well distributed. Not the least remarkable and charming gift of the second Mann S. Valentine was his real understanding of human nature, and a consequent profound interest in the welfare and needs of the people at large. All his life long he had possessed those opportunities which culture affords for most wholesome and satisfying living, and it was his desire that the people whom he loved should be given every opportunity for the very best education. He conceived the idea of a public museum for Richmond, and at his death, by a codicil to his will, bequeathed his residence and grounds, his furniture, books, manuscripts, autographs, pictures, curios, jewelry and china for establishing in the city of Richmond an institution to be known as the Valentine Museum. This was not all—he provided liberally by other means for the maintenance of the institution. He appointed his brother, Edward W. Valentine, and his sons, Granville G. Ben-



MANN S. VALENTINE.

jamin B. and Edward P. Valentine, trustees of this museum, and instructed them to procure from the Virginia Legislature an act of incorporation. Mr. Valentine died in 1892, and on January 21, 1894, the act of the Assembly incorporating the Valentine Museum was approved. The gentlemen named as trustees under the will of his brother and father incorporated themselves under this act of incorporation into a board of trustees for the museum, framing and adopting the necessary constitution and by-laws.

After several years of unceasing labor to properly classify and display the exhibit the museum was formally opened to the public in the fall of 1895.

Additions to Board. The governing board of the museum remained as at first constituted until the death of Edward Pleasants Valentine in March, 1908, when Mann S. Valentine, the third, Frederick S. Valentine, the fourth, Henry Lee Valentine, the fifth, and Henry Lee Valentine, the sixth, were added to the board of trustees.

Throughout a life of varied interests and responsibilities, the late Edward Pleasants Valentine gave the very best of himself to the development of the museum. He was a profound scholar; a man with a genius for organization, and with marked executive ability. Clear-sighted, direct, with a large vision, capable, few men are, entering fully into and sharing in the interests of others, he very forcibly impressed the life of his community, and left, in his friendships and his excellent archaeological and historical work for the museum, an enduring memorial of himself.

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Along the east wall of this room is a case containing many rare and beautiful examples of early illuminations. Four leaves from a medieval chant book show the exquisite work of monks. There is in this case also a sheet from a Christmas carol, "to the initial letter of which is worked the scene of the Nativity. The border of this carol—two inches in width—is decorated in gorgeous flowers and cherubs. This case contains also a series of Ganyerlin's wood engravings, Strassburg, 1596.

In this room are also found the charming engravings and water colors of the late William J. Hubbard and Edward Pleasants, who were both early residents of Richmond, and the thirteen sketches of the well-known French artist, Thomas Couture.

The Virginia Room. This room contains an interesting collection of antiques, whose associations are distinctly Virginia. Views of Richmond in early days and choice manuscripts, bearing the autographs of John Randolph of Roanoke, Thomas Mann, Monroe, William H. Cabell, Tazewell, Generals Washington, Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson, and the manuscript of Doctor Bagby's "Conal Reminiscences" are in frames and cases on the walls of this room.

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HOUSE, FRONT VIEW.

bank of the Cumberland River, near Paducah, Tenn., modern Cherokee pottery and the implements used in making it; soapstone vessels, and a collection of painted stones and pendants, and boat-shaped stones and pendants.

There are more than a thousand discolored stones in this collection. A few are from sites of settlements in Virginia, the remainder are from Western North Carolina, found on the surface of the ground in fertile valleys formerly occupied by the aborigines. At least 150 exhibited are from burial mounds.

There are large quantities of spear heads, knives, hammer stones, perforated sinkers, clubheads, stone perforators and drills and scrapers. The collection of the Jasper Allan, McCombs, Wells, Smithers and Carr mountains, and the Stone Pillars in Swain, Jackson, Cherokee and Haywood counties, North Carolina, are cases in the corner of the museum.

One of the most interesting groups in the archaeological collection is that of flaked and polished celts, stone mortars and pestles.

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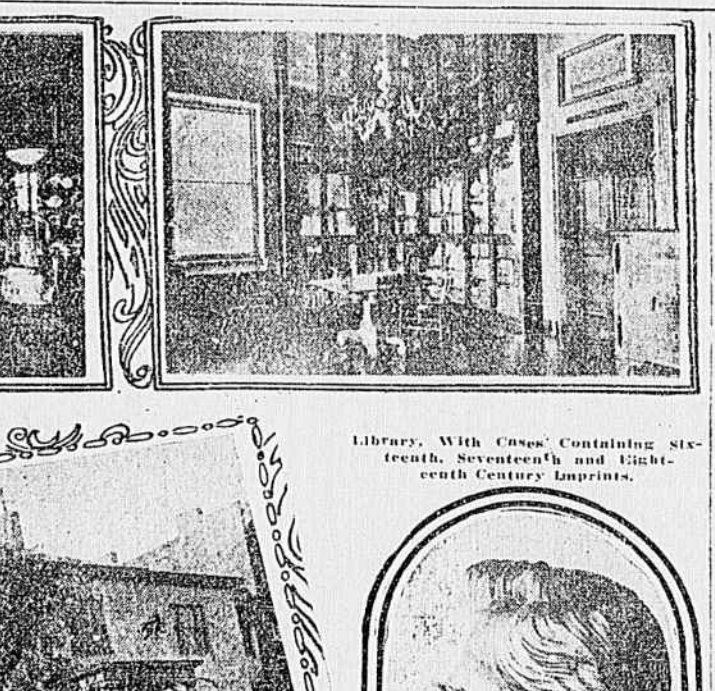
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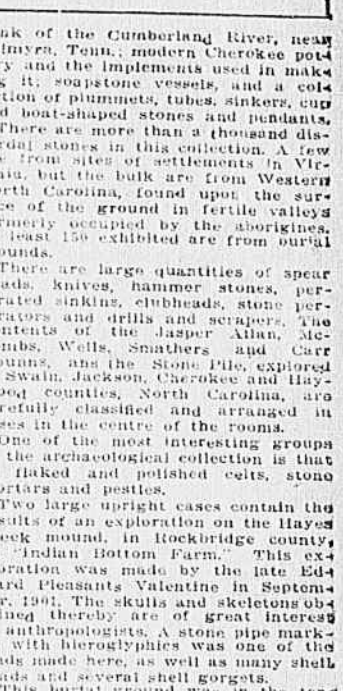
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Daughters of American Revolution in Virginia

The Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized in Virginia in 1891 by the appointment of Mrs. William Wirt Henry State regent for Virginia by the National Congress of Daughters.

The first chapter formed was the Old Dominion, in Richmond, in 1892, and the first State meeting was called in January, 1895, the members being guests of the Old Dominion Chapter. At that time there were twelve chapters and about 300 members in the State.

The objects of this organization are to perpetuate the memory of the spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence; to encourage historical research, and publish true history; to preserve documents and relics of the Revolutionary period; to promote an interest in the study of history, and to celebrate historical anniversaries, and to foster patriotism and love of country.

Work in This State. How well the Virginia Daughters have followed these objects is proved by the many graceful monuments, beautiful tablets, memorial buildings, fine buildings and simple "D. A. R." markers, which are found all over this fair Commonwealth, from the mountains to the sea, and from Carolina to the Potomac.

In the public schools in all parts of the State are splendid gold medals of the historical epochs, or for the highest grade in the study of history, given by local chapters of the D. A. R. Many deeds, land grants or more private documents of historical interest have been unearthed from dusty attic or mouldy vault, and given to the light of day. Valuable court records of times past from various parishes and old courthouses, which, in the course of another generation might have fallen into irretrievable decay, or become the prey of all-devouring fire, have been rescued, copied, certified and are now in places of safety.